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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1084
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000531

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P, IO/RHS, DRL/MLGA/EUR/PGI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2017

TAGS: PHUM PREL UNHRC GV

SUBJECT: U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ELECTION -- GUINEA

REF: A. STATE 58056

¶B. STATE 63345
¶C. CONAKRY 515

Classified By: Ambassador Jackson McDonald. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (C) On May 14, the Ambassador met briefly with Prime Minister Lansana Kouyate (in the absence of the Foreign Minister who is abroad) to urge Guinea not to support Belarus's candidacy for the U.N. Human Rights Council. The Ambassador expressed dismay that the Foreign Ministry had informed us on May 10 that Guinea would support Belarus. He said that this decision must have been taken by "old thinkers" still buried in the bureaucracy and that it did not appear to reflect the democratic values espoused by the recently appointed Kouyate government. Moreover, Guinea's unhelpful position on the Belarus candidacy would be noted by Washington just three weeks before the Prime Minister's planned visit.

¶12. (C) Prime Minister Kouyate was not aware of the Belarus issue, and he was not at all pleased with the Foreign Ministry's position. In the Ambassador's presence, he ordered the Secretary General of Foreign Ministry to come see him at once. The Prime Minister assured the Ambassador that he would "take care of it."

¶13. (C) French Ambassador Jean-Michel Berrit confirmed to us that he has received similar instructions concerning Belarus from Paris and that he will deliver the demarche to the Prime Minister on May 15.

¶14. (C) Comment: Recently appointed Prime Minister Kouyate has a lot on his plate, especially given ongoing unrest within the Guinean military. Normally, we would have dealt with the Foreign Minister on this matter, but he is out of the country. This episode revealed, however, the limits of Prime Minister Kouyate's command over old-thinkers within the government bureaucracy. In the Ambassador's presence, the Prime Minister asked his chief of staff and his chief of protocol which minister has interim responsibility for the Foreign Ministry during the Foreign Minister's absence. Neither knew. He asked who represents Guinea in Geneva. Neither knew. In short, the Prime Minister still has a long way to go before achieving effective authority over the ministerial bureaucracies.

MCDONALD